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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 000647

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SUBJECT: INDONESIA READIES FOR APRIL 9 LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS

REF: JAKARTA 00621 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph L. Novak, reasons 1.4(b+d).

**¶1.** (C) SUMMARY: Election workers are setting up polling stations across the nation as Indonesians gear up to vote in the April 9 national legislative elections. The national Election Commission (KPU)--which faces the daunting task of administering this huge enterprise in the world's third largest democracy--says it is ready for the task at hand. That said, there could be some snarls. U.S. government assistance has supported the electoral process; in the meantime, Mission teams are fanning out to observe the process. END SUMMARY.

#### INDONESIA READIES FOR ELECTIONS

**¶2.** (SBU) Indonesia is preparing for parliamentary elections on April 9. The whole electoral process is exceedingly complicated in this, the world's third largest democracy. Using four ballots with more than six hundred candidate choices, voters face the daunting task of deciding who will represent them in the national and regional legislatures (DPR and DPD) and in provincial and local councils (DPRD). The GOI is putting up over a half million polling stations in Indonesia and 873 abroad to accommodate the expected 171 million voters. Polling stations are open from 7:00 AM until 12:00 PM. "Quick" counts will emerge giving initial findings re the results. Official results will only be available in May. National elections were last held in 2004.

**¶3.** (U) President Yudhoyono met with his Cabinet on April 7 and declared that the nation was "ready" for the elections. Security forces have been in position for some time. Thus far, the campaign period has been largely peaceful with some limited instances of violence taking place in the Aceh region of Sumatra.

#### POTENTIAL SNARLS?

**¶4.** (SBU) Ahead of election day, there are some concerns about the process. Some observers worry that not all eligible voters will be able to vote due to problems with the voter registration lists and registration process. Among other reasons, voter lists have been a cause for concern due to allegations of fraud (see reftels). Some names in the recent East Java gubernatorial race were found to be fictitious, for example. The KPU has asked its local branches to review all voter lists.

**¶5.** (SBU) One of the main logistical obstacles is processing all the voters during the five-hour voting period. According to an International Foundation for Elections (IFES) study the majority of Indonesia's voters still do not understand how to vote or how new regulations affect them. In voting simulations run by IFES and UNDP, voters who knew

what they were doing took about five minutes to cast their vote (vs. three minutes in 2004). Some districts might not have enough ballots, particularly those with high turnout.

¶6. (C) Courts are reportedly preparing for legal challenges to the election results. Major parties such as Golkar and Indonesian Party of Democratic Struggle (PDI-P) have declared that they will reject the results if they find anything amiss in either the counting or voters' lists. President Yudhoyono's Partai Demokrat (PD) is expected to do well across large parts of the country and other parties are clearly threatening to call foul if PD does well.

#### USG SUPPORT FOR PROCESS

¶7. (SBU) The U.S. government has provided \$8 million in assistance to strengthen the democratic electoral process in Indonesia. USAID has implemented political party strengthening and reform programs; targeted election management assistance; and training on peaceful political competition. Through USAID partners--the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the International Republican Institute (IRI) and the International Foundation for Elections (IFES)--the USG has helped train women candidates and provided technical assistance to the KPU on developing educational programs, vote counting and reporting procedures, and training on strengthening the voter registry.

¶8. (SBU) Mission teams plus these USG-funded NGOs and the USG-funded Carter Center effort in Aceh will also be supporting Indonesia's democratic process by observing the election from sites across the country on election day.

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